COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SUB-ELEMENT

GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTION STATEMENTS

Introduction

The Community Participation Sub-element of the City of Sunnyvale's General Plan establishes a set of integrated goals, policies and action statements which guide decision-making and lead toward the active involvement of residents, community organizations and businesses in shaping their future and the future of their city.

The goals, policies and action statements within this sub-element are based on the following assumptions:

1. Community participation is an essential method for local government to identify and respond to citizens' concerns and needs, and therefore improve the effectiveness of municipal services and policy making processes.

2. With a significant level of collaboration among the City, its residents, community organizations and businesses, community participation can become a method for community problem solving. Creation and maintenance of partnerships with individuals and organizations will help facilitate self-resolution of issues and addressing of needs by within the community those affected.

3. Citizens need comprehensive and usable information about City resources, programs, services and policy making processes as well as financial, legal, and other constraints in order to effectively participate in governmental processes.

4. Involvement of citizens in their community and local government helps enable the City to effectively meet the needs of its residents.

5. Active participation by citizens develops a sense of commitment to their community and its improvement.

6. Citizen input in the decision making process is crucial in order to ensure that City programs and policies reflect the needs and goals of the community and therefore reduce the risks and costs associated with actions unsupported or opposed by the community.

7. Because government resources are limited, citizen participation can help achieve creative and responsive solutions which can leverage combined community resources as well as reduce demand for public services.

8. The level of access to City officials, staff, services and documents affects the extent to which citizens are involved in their community, feel that it serves their needs, and are able and willing to participate in civic affairs.

9. Citizens must have a sense of the community to which they belong in order to be willing to participate in the formation of its future and for local government to serve the citizens' needs. The development of a positive and healthy identity reinforces the ability of community institutions and citizens to become involved, stay informed, and work towards common community goals.

10. Finally, limited public resources will require clear focus on methods and results of communications programs and technology to reduce cost and duplication of effort.

Community Education

Goal 7.2A

Achieve a community in which citizens and businesses are informed about local issues and City programs and services.

Policy 7.2A.1 - Community Networks

Use community and business organizations and networks as a resource for community education and outreach.

7.2A.1a   Encourage the development of and support community organizations and networks for public information.

7.2A.1b   Provide community organizations and networks with and encourage distribution of information regarding City events, programs and services.

7.2A.1c   Work with local institutions, school districts, and other public agencies to develop informational networks serving the community.

Policy 7.2A.2 - Information Distribution

Publish and distribute information regarding City programs and services, City Council actions, and policy issues.

7.2A.2a   Produce a periodic comprehensive publication on City affairs that is distributed to all City residents and businesses.

7.2A.2b   Identify citizens, community organizations and businesses affected by significant City actions and decisions and ensure that they receive timely and appropriate information about participation in the decision-making process.

7.2A.2c   Evaluate periodically City public information materials, activities and plans, using surveys, focus groups, or other means to assess effectiveness, minimize duplication, maximize cost-effectiveness of information distribution, and respond to community needs.

7.2A.2d   Assess periodically the impact of public information materials and activities about City programs and services on public demand for City services, especially for those which are not self-supporting.

7.2A.2e   Provide outreach and staff involvement through mechanisms such as a speakers' bureau to provide information to community organizations.

7.2A.2f   Develop and regularly update a coordinated database for information distribution.

Policy 7.2A.3 - Media Relations

Encourage comprehensive media coverage of City actions, services and programs.

7.2A.3a   Provide news media with timely and comprehensive information regarding Council actions and City information of interest to the general public.

7.2A.3b   Assist the news media in receiving information and access to the City Council, staff, and documents for the coverage of City issues.

Policy 7.2A.4 - Appropriate Technology

Identify communications media and telecommunications technology which are appropriate and cost effective to provide information to and access for the community.

7.2A.4a   Monitor telecommunications technology and policy developments and evaluate their potential impact on cable television programming and other public information activities to improve communications, reduce duplication of effort, and enhance cost-effectiveness.

7.2A.4b   Develop a telecommunications policy to guide utilization of technology for public participation and citizen involvement.

Community Involvement

Goal 7.2B

Achieve a community in which citizens and businesses are actively involved in shaping the quality of life and participate in local community and government activities.

Policy 7.2B.1 - Planning and Implementation

Plan for and encourage citizen involvement in the development and implementation of City and community programs and services.

7.2B.1a Continue to provide support citizen participation in City programs and services and develop materials to assist involvement.

7.2B.1b Promote involvement of businesses in community activities and services.

7.2B.1c Work with local school districts and community organizations to encourage student involvement in local government and community activities and issues.

7.2B.1d Promote public awareness and understanding of financial and other constraints on municipal services, and involve citizens to identify solutions which balance public demand for services with the limited resources available.

Policy 7.2B.2 - Volunteerism

Encourage citizen volunteerism in community affairs.

7.2B.2a Continue to evaluate the use of volunteers as a method of maintaining and/or enhancing municipal service delivery and as a means for building a stronger community.

7.2B.2b Identify opportunities for citizens and mechanisms for volunteers to maintain and/or enhance City programs, services and communication, as well as other community efforts.

7.2B.2c Publicly recognize citizen involvement, contributions and achievements.

7.2B.2d Support City and corporate employee involvement in community activities.

7.2B.2e Support community efforts to implement effective volunteerism.

Policy 7.2B.3 - Community Organizations

Support local and neighborhood organizations and strengthen contacts between the City and community groups.

7.2B.3a Identify and strengthen contacts between the City and community organizations.

7.2B.3b   Coordinate City neighborhood programs and outreach to improve support, communications and effectiveness.

7.2B.3c   Create or support the development of a directory of community organizations.

Policy 7.2B.4 - Community Self-reliance

Encourage and support the development of greater community self-reliance for problem solving through effective community and neighborhood organizations.

7.2B.5a   Identify and support mechanisms to strengthen the capability of community organizations to achieve community-wide goals.

7.2B.5b   Encourage grass-roots efforts to identify and develop solutions for community problems.

Policy 7.2B.5 - Partnerships

Foster partnerships and relationships among public institutions, business and industry, community and service organizations, and the City to address community issues.

7.2B.4a   Support communication among various segments of the community to create and strengthen relationships.

7.2B.4b   Identify and build on opportunities for partnerships between the City and the community which can leverage resources to meet community needs.

7.2B.4c   Facilitate the development of relationships and partnerships among community organizations and the business community to achieve community goals.

Policy 7.2B.6 - Philanthropy

Encourage citizen contributions and business volunteerism, involvement and philanthropy to support community programs and activities.

7.2B.6a   Seek opportunities for the City to be a catalyst to increase the frequency, amount and impact of contributions from citizens, community organizations and businesses.

7.2B.6b   Facilitate the ability of businesses to support or supplement public resources to achieve community goals.

7.2B.6c   Publicly recognize business community involvement, contributions and achievements.

Policy Making and Program Planning

Goal 7.2C

Assure that City services, programs and policy decisions are responsive to community input and feedback while recognizing the limits to the City's ability to expand municipal services.

7.2C.1 - Representation

Plan for and encourage an appropriate cross-section of the community when obtaining public input for policy decisions.

7.2C.1a   Develop specific criteria and plans to obtain a diversity of representation in citizen participation activities.

7.2C.1b   Encourage a diverse pool of applicants for membership on boards, commissions and task forces to reflect the appropriate cross-section of the community.

Policy 7.2C.2 - Notification and Access

Ensure that appropriate and effective public notification and access, in accordance with City Council policies, are provided to enhance meaningful community participation in the policy making process.

7.2C.2a   Notify appropriate citizens and community groups about opportunities for involvement in policy making and program planning.

7.2C.2b   Ensure that all public board, commission and Council meetings provide an opportunity for public input and involvement.

7.2C.2c   Provide opportunities for the private sector to participate in the development of relevant public policy decisions.

7.2C.2d   Ensure that public notification measures are proportionate to the magnitude and public sensitivity of issues, in addition to the minimum legal and policy requirements for notification and access.

Policy 7.2C.3 - Staff Role

Use City staff as facilitators to promote and enhance community involvement in policy making and program planning.

7.2C.3a   Identify opportunities and develop appropriate plans for City personnel to meet and interact with citizen and community groups regarding City issues.

7.2C.3b   Prepare and train staff to effectively solicit community feedback for use in policy making and program planning.

Policy 7.2C.4 - Citizen Involvement in Policy Making

Assure that citizens and organizations are actively involved in the identification of community needs and the development of solutions.

7.2C.4a   Enhance the ability of board and commission members to act as key policy advisors to Council through orientation, training, and communication.

7.2C.4b   Develop appropriate community involvement plans and document community involvement for policy making and planning processes.

7.2C.4c   Establish community task forces to advise the City on issues when appropriate.

7.2C.4d   Assist citizens and community organizations in seeking community-based solutions where appropriate, rather than those led and financed by government.

Policy 7.2C.5 - Feedback

Provide opportunities for community input and monitor feedback.

7.2C.5a   Identify appropriate citizen feedback mechanisms to provide the optimal level of community input in public decision making.

7.2C.5b   Evaluate public involvement measures to ensure their utility as policy making and program planning tools.

7.2C.5c   Use surveys to determine community awareness and opinion concerning local issues and to provide information for policy and program planning.

Service Delivery

Goal 7.2D

Assure that all citizens have reasonable access to City information, services, programs, policy makers and staff within budgeted resources.

Policy 7.2D.1 - Needs Assessment

Assess community needs in provision of and access to City services.

7.2D.1a   Develop mechanisms to assess community needs in provision of services.

7.2D.1b   Monitor legislative and regulatory trends regarding citizen access and public information issues.

Policy 7.2D.2 - Marketing

Provide opportunities for all citizens and organizations to successfully interact and do business with the City.

7.2D.2a   Continue to provide and support a central information center in City Hall to assist citizens in locating and using City services.

7.2D.2b   Continue a high level of community awareness of City services and programs.

7.2D.2c   Develop mechanisms to evaluate the impact of marketing efforts on the public demand for services and the City's ability to deliver them.

Policy 7.2D.3 - Access

Provide reasonable and fair citizen access to information and services within budgeted resources.

7.2D.3a   Review City service levels to provide reasonable and cost effective access to City facilities, programs and services.

7.2D.3b   Respond in a timely manner to all citizen inquiries or concerns regarding City services.

7.2D.3c   Provide appropriate language translation assistance and translated materials to citizens seeking City services.

7.2D.3d   Enhance the ability of City programs and staff to serve community diversity.

7.2D.3e   Develop suitable customer feedback mechanisms for City programs to use to assess quality and customer service issues and opportunities for improvement.

Community Identity

Goal 7.2E

Create a strong, positive community identity.

Policy 7.2E.1 - Recognition

Encourage public and professional recognition through awards and promotion of significant accomplishments and innovations.

7.2E.1a   Identify opportunities for local, state and national recognition of City achievements, innovations, personnel, and programs and services.

7.2E.1b   Maintain a commitment to continuous improvement of City programs and services.

Policy 7.2E.2 - Community Celebration

Encourage celebrations of community and projects which focus on the character, diversity and quality of Sunnyvale.

7.2E.2a   Sponsor and support community special events which strengthen a positive community identity.

Policy 7.2E.3 - Regional Role

Take an appropriate active role in regional, state and national activities.

7.2E.4a   Exchange ideas and innovations with other communities.

7.2E.4b   Facilitate the exchange of technical assistance between the City and other agencies and the private sector.

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Deputy City Clerk Certification   _Carol Ann Butler_